

Abstract

A needle passer instrument for use in minimally invasive surgical procedures, including arthroscopy. The instrument has upper and lower jaws for engaging tissue and a handle. A removable needle engaging cartridge is mounted to the upper jaw. A surgical needle with attached suture is mounted in a needle passage in the lower jaw. A needle actuation rod engages the surgical needle and pushes the needle through tissue contained between the jaws. The needle is engaged by the cartridge, and the needle may be cut away from the suture.